THE TWO BLIND WOMEN OF ARCON

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"Teacher," Mr. Hunt, and Helen Keller at the house in Scotland.

How Helen Keller and Her Famous Teacher Have Strangely Reversed Their Roles

by FRAZIER HUNT

READING TIME ● 5 MINUTES 5 SECONDS

IN a "wee hoose" in the rugged Highlands of Scotland Helen Keller, the deaf and blind genius, is exchanging rôles with her great teacher, Anne Sullivan Macy.

It is now "Teacher," old, tired, ill, and blind, who is being helped and taught and loved by her own beloved pupil, who is fourteen years her junior.

With them is a third who for almost twenty years has been their inseparable companion—Polly Thompson, Secretary Extraordinary. They call themselves "the Three Buccaneers."

A year and a half ago it was decided to leave their little house on Long Island and seek peace and quiet in the mountains and glens of northern Scotland.

There was tragedy to meet head on. "Teacher" was going blind: "Teacher," who for almost fifty years had led by the hand the deaf, blind, and originally speechless Helen.

It was Polly Thompson who chose the hidden farmhouse a dozen miles north of Inverness. Here it was now Helen's turn to be teacher and leader.

Hours on end she sits in the warm sunshine and, holding Teacher's hand, talks to her. Again she brings out her books in Braille and reads to the one who for so many years read to her.

Despite everything there is much laughter in the little house. Here are three people endowed with that most precious of all gifts—an unfailing sense of humor. It makes a visit to this home something to be remembered all your life.

The morning that I arrived in Inverness from London I had thought that possibly Polly alone might meet me. But there on the platform were the three of them. Even Teacher was determined to make the motor trip from the farmhouse, and Helen was as happy as a girl home from school. We had a long and joyous breakfast at the station hotel and then we started off over the moors.

It was June. Helen would clap her hands and beaming with happiness would say, "The golden gorse—it is beautiful." Her keen nostrils caught the delicate scent of the Highland flowering bush even before my eyes could find the spot.

"It is so beautiful here in the hills," she would say slowly, but in words you could clearly understand. "Oh, the mountain broom!"—and she would breathe deeply of the strange fragrance.

Now and again Polly would tap out in her hands bits of description of the distant snow-clad mountains or of the near-by rolling hills along the Scottish lakes. Helen's face would light up. Hers was a poet's world. No world of reality could be half so beautiful.

It was almost two in the afternoon when we drove through the little village of South Arcon, in the Muir of Ord, then down a country lane, across a tiny creek, and then up a winding hill, and stopped in front of a century-old two-story stone farmhouse.

NO house in all the world is comparable to this simple home. I am prouder to have been a guest there than to have lunched at the White House, or dined with the Prince of Wales, or sat at the feet of Gandhi.

Polly rustled a high tea, and one of the two little Scotch maids brought out sheepskins and we laid them on the grass and stretched out in the sun.

After a long silence Teacher said: "None of us can ever think of living in a flat country again after these lovely mountains."

Polly translated it to Helen's palm, and Helen nodded. "These hills are so restful," she pronounced slowly.

Two blind women so conscious of the beautiful hills and mountains that they had never seen!

After tea Helen and I went for a walk. Polly had had a rope stretched for some two hundred yards along a winding country lane. With one hand on the rope Helen could make good speed. For an hour each morning and evening she walked there.

I took her arm and every few score of feet we would stop and I would take her free hand and place it on my face. Her second finger would rest just below my nostrils; her first and third fingers at the corners of my lips, and her thumb and small finger on the larynx. I would form my words carefully and distinctly and Helen would answer eagerly.

In a short time it was no more difficult to carry on a conversation with her than, say, with one who is slightly hard of hearing.

To her all nature is beautiful and kindly. But not to Teacher. I recall Teacher saying: "This worship of Nature is foolish beyond words. Where Nature does one good thing it does a thousand cruel things."

To Helen the ratio was exactly the opposite. But Teacher, genius though she is, is an Irish realist, while Helen is an irreconcilable poet and humanist. Altogether, there are few close companions whose theories and ideas are farther apart than Helen Keller's and Teacher's.

It is sad to know that some day this great woman, Anne Sullivan Macy, must go the way of all flesh. It will be a lonely and broken Helen she will leave behind. To Helen, Teacher has meant life itself. She feels deeply that the world has paid her far too much honor, while it has neglected her other half, Teacher. And in the long Scottish twilight, when even in the summer the sweet smell of the peat block rises from the little open fireplace, she will speak of this woman she loves with tears welling in her sightless eyes. . . .

"We've all been invited to go to Japan," Teacher told me with all the enthusiasm of youth. "I'm sure we could do a great deal of good there toward breaking down much of the present misunderstanding that exists between the two countries. We'd be a Helen Keller Peace Mission. We're coming back to New York early this fall, and then we could start to the Far East. Don't you think we should try it?"

"My dear Teacher," I said, "there is nothing in the world that you two cannot do—if you want to do it badly enough. You have proved that a hundred times."

And I believe that as much as I believe in the eternal miracle of night following day.

THE END

Vox

THE BOOTLEGGER IS STILL WITH US

JERSEY CITY, N. J.—Former Governor Alfred E. Smith's analysis of the liquor industry of today in One Year of Repeal —Has It Worked? (December 8 Liberty) reflected the situation admirably. That personal liberty has been restored to our countrymen is an established fact; but we must all put our shoulders to the wheel to develop a public consciousness of the importance of drinking moderately, and the fact that liquor is not a luxury.

To obtain a quality drink it is no longer necessary to indulge in the luxury of buying imported whiskies, gins, wines, and cordials. American liquors are good and the consumption of American products will promote the welfare of the American farmer, manufacturer, and supplier.

The elimination of the bootlegger will come only when Congress and the legislatures of the various states realize the necessity of reducing the present high taxes. For instance: the federal and state tax on a case of quart-size bottles of 100-proof whisky totals nine dollars in New Jersey and New York; in Indiana it is eighteen dollars per case. The bootlegger, who does not pay these taxes and large license fees, is still able to thrive.

Enforcement against the bootlegger and lower taxes will provide increased revenues for federal and state governments, encourage the production of better products, reduce prices to the consumer, and destroy the bootlegging industry.—*Samuel Ungerleider, President Distillers and Brewers Corporation of America.*

MUD ON THEIR TAILS

WICHITA FALLS, TEX.—Referring to that Vox Popper in November 10 Liberty who had a scheme for making money from the government by not raising hogs:

We tried to raise hogs on Texas black lands, and the mud balled up on their tails until it pulled the skin from their eyes and they died for want of sleep. My claim for not raising hogs has not been acted upon yet.—*C. A. R.*

17,000 EMPTIES

PITTSBURGH, PA.—I heartily agree with F. Scott McBride's article in December 15 Liberty, Repeal Is Already a Failure. After a big football game here last fall the local press carried a story that 17,000 empty whisky bottles were removed from the stadium.—*Samuel C. Todd.*

PORTLAND, ORE. — F. Scott McBride backs up his argument that Repeal Is Already a Failure by claiming the church bodies denounce it. In a South Carolina town recently I asked a native if liquor could be bought there. "Can liquor be bought here?" he repeated. "See that church over there? That's the only place you can't buy it."—*Elton W. Lillie.*

NEW ORLEANS, LA. — Mr. McBride stated, "In Jackson, Mississippi, arrests for drunkenness show a 70-per-cent increase for the first six months of 1934 compared with the first six months of 1933." But Mississippi, along with Alabama, has never had repeal; so why talk of their drunkards? — *Daniel Thomas.*

CHICAGO, ILL.—I was a deputy sheriff attached to the Bay County jail, Michigan, during 1932, and of the 200 prisoners there 98 per cent were serving time as prohibition violators. Yet every one of them was as good a citizen as F. Scott McBride, whose organization helped put them there. Why should Liberty waste precious space on such nonsense of bigotry and deceit?—*C. Poulaki.*

JON OF FINLAND

ATLANTA, GA.—

The Finn's a funny fellow.
Though living far away,
He don't know any better
Than to come across and pay.
We hardly know your country;
We don't know what's its plan;
But we hail you, Jon of Finland,
Square-shooting, honest man!

—*C. A. Alexander.*

HE MIGHT WRITE A BOOK

SAN MARINO, CALIF. — That letter from One of the Snowshoers of Ottawa, Ontario, in December 29 Vox Pop, threatening to write a book on the ignorance of Americans concerning Canadian life, gave me a severe pain in the neck.

I might write a book on the ignorance of Canadians concerning American life. Hundreds of thousands of Americans have crossed the border and traveled from one coast of the Dominion to the other. They know as much about Canadian life as does the dyed-in-the-wool Canadian.—*Clarence M. Fink.*

THAT FARLEY EDITORIAL

CLARKSBURG, W. VA.—I have very much enjoyed Bernarr Macfadden's editorials; but the one in December 15 Liberty, The Post Office Department Now a Profitable Business, indicates that Postmaster-General Farley put one over. As the whole country now knows, that supposed profit of $12,000,000 which Farley claimed was actually a deficit of $52,000,000.—*Harvey F. Smith, Attorney at Law.*

DEMING, N. M.—Even if Farley's reported profit in the Post Office Department had been true, he could not have claimed the credit for it. This rightfully would have gone to some civil-service man who has had years of experience in post-office work.—*H. Louis Boggs.*

ROSEBUD, MO.—B. M.'s eulogy of Big Jim Farley provoked the first hearty chuckle many Missouri Republicans have enjoyed since Santa Claus stacked the cards against them last November. We cannot rid ourselves of a suspicion that Mr. Macfadden wrote the editorial with his tongue in his cheek.—*Owell Hohum.*

SARGENT, NEB.—I should like to know the real truth concerning the savings—if any—which Farley netted in the Post Office Department.—*Harold I. Perrin.*

KLAMATH FALLS, ORE.—Jim Farley's figures were good examples of how the taxpayers are being hoodwinked by politicians.—*E. E. Magee.*

HONOR ROLL FOR THESE

SPRINGFIELD, ILL.—If man's best animal friend, the dog, has instincts, thoughts, and impulses, Sewell Peaslee Wright certainly translated them interestingly, understandingly, and accurately in Family Tradition (December 29 Liberty).

This story did honor to the best of magazines.—*Earl B. Searcy, State Senator, Forty-fifth District.*

LAKE VILLAGE, ARK.—Sewell Peaslee Wright's Family Tradition reflected credit on both the author and the editor who chose it for Liberty.—*W. T. Person.*

NEW YORK, N. Y.—Congratulations on Rebellion in Crestwood, by Taylor Bynum (December 22 Liberty). It was one of the best stories you've ever published.—*Marion B.*

STRAIGHT TO HEAVEN

DANVILLE, VA.—The Rev. C. C. Crawford of the Metropolitan Christian Church, St. Louis, wrote in December 29 Vox Pop challenging the reputed statement of Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, New York pastor, that he would not lend moral or physical support to any kind of war.

I question the possibility of Dr. Fosdick's refusal to aid his country in the event of another war. Doubtless he and the rest of the D.D.s would do as they did in the last war—start preaching the cream of the nation's young men into battle and telling them that if they died fighting, their souls would go straight to heaven.—*S. D. Rickman, Accountant and Auditor.*

ARAB WOULD SPIT FOR A WEEK

GRIMSHAW, ALTA.—Hell Riders, by W. J. Blackledge (beginning in November 17 Liberty), was especially interesting to me, since I spent three years with armored car patrols on the Irak desert. But when Blackledge said he was able to see two golden domes outside the North Gate at Bagdad, he was mistaken. The North Gate is on the left bank of the Tigris, which flows through the city, while the golden domes are on the right bank and several miles upstream from the North Gate.

Again Blackledge spoke of a pigskin in which to hang the Ameer. Where did they get the pig? An Arab would spit for a week if he even saw pork. We convoyed a supply train to Ramadi once, and Arabs ambuscaded us from the sand hills. Their bullets smashed the engine of a truck loaded with bacon

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